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Farm Broadcasters Letter



Letter No. 2177

August 23, 1984

MORE GRAIN SALES TO USSR

Private exporters reported on Aug. 21 to the U.S. Department of Agriculture grain sales to the USSR of 500,000 metric tons of hard red winter wheat during the 1984-85 marketing year. Sales of wheat and corn to the USSR for delivery during the first year of the Long Term Grain Supply Agreement, which began Oct. 1, 1983, total 13,859,700 tons, of which wheat is 7,259,200 tons and corn is 6,600,500 tons. In addition sales of soybeans total 416,200 tons. Sales of wheat and corn to the USSR for delivery during the second year of the agreement, which begins Oct. 1, 1984, total 7,124,200 tons, of which wheat is 1,025,000 tons and corn is 6,099,200 tons.

U.S. AG EXPORTS - 1984 & '85

U.S. agricultural exports for fiscal 1984 are forecast by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at \$38 billion, unchanged from the estimate made last May and 9 pct. above the \$34.8 billion for fiscal 1983. Export volume, however, is expected to drop one million tons from the May figure and total 141 million, 3 pct. below the 144.8 million in fiscal 1983. For fiscal 1985, U.S. agricultural exports may increase modestly in volume, but could decrease slightly in value. A continued strong U.S. dollar, foreign debt problems, and subsidized competitor exports will play an important role in shaping fiscal 1985 export outlook.

EXPORT HIGHLIGHTS: OILSEEDS

Exports of oilseeds and products are projected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at \$9.1 billion, up 3 pct. from last year, but down \$300 million from the May estimate. Although the value of oilseeds and products is up, the volume of U.S. exports will slip well below 1983. Smaller U.S. soybean supplies, larger Argentine production, and weak meal demand in the EC are the main reasons for the volume decline.

FOOD PRICES RISE SLIGHTLY

The consumer price index for food in July rose 0.4 pct. from the June level, before seasonal adjustment--3.4 pct. above July a year ago--the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports. Food prices were held down by large supplies of meats and small increases in food processing and distribution costs. Food price increases are expected to be moderate for the rest of the year, reflecting prospects for good harvests of most crops this fall, and continued small increases in food marketing costs.

FEED GRAIN
SUPPLY UP

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the domestic feed grain supply for 1984/85, based on Aug. 1 conditions, will total about 263.5 million metric tons--235.3 million of new-crop grains, 27.5 million carryover stocks, and imports of 700,000 tons. The total supply of 1984/85 would be about 30 million tons larger than available during 1983/84, but 55 million less than the record supply of 318.7 million in 1982/83. This year's corn crop, based on Aug. 1 conditions, is forecast at almost 7.7 billion bushels, 194.8 million metric tons up, 84 pct. from 1983/84's 4.2 billion. Production of sorghum, barley and oats will add 40.6 million metric tons to this year's feed grain supply.

EXPORT
HIGHLIGHTS...
WHEAT

U.S. exports of wheat for fiscal 1984 are still forecast by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at \$6.3 billion and 39 million tons. Abundant stocks in the U.S., Canada, Australia, and the European Community will keep prices soft and make the int'l wheat market highly competitive.

EXPORT
HIGHLIGHTS -
COARSE GRAINS

Exports of coarse grains are forecast by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at \$8.4 billion and 55.4 million tons, down from the \$8.6 and 56.1 million estimated in May. This reduction stems primarily from the increased foreign use of wheat for feed. Also, many importers are delaying purchases in anticipation of a larger U.S. crop. Although the export forecast for coarse grains is lower, the outlook for sorghum has improved, as some importers have switched from corn to more abundant sorghum.

CHANGES IN
PACKERS &
STOCKYARDS
RULES

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has adopted several rule changes intended to reduce the regulatory burden on the livestock marketing and meat industries without lessening the protection provided for producers, consumers and industry members under the Packers and Stockyards Act. The changes are in the Aug. 17 and Aug. 20 Federal Register. Copies of the complete changes are available from Packers and Stockyards Admin., Room 3039 South, USDA, Wash., D.C. 20250. Phone: 202/447-7051.

FARM LABOR
& WAGES

During the week of July 8-14, 1984, 4.1 million people were working on farms and ranches in the U.S., according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This includes workers hired directly by the farm operators and agricultural services employees working on farms. This is up 1 pct. from the number for the corresponding week last year. Hired workers represented 43 pct. of the total. The wage rate for all hired farm workers was \$4.16 per hour, up 1.2 pct. from July 1983.

FARM WORKERS
& PERQUISITES

Of the nearly 2 million hired farm workers during one week in July, 42 pct. received perquisites such as meals, housing or motor vehicle in addition to the cash wages, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. About 13 pct. were furnished a house in addition to the cash wages, averaging \$4.16 per hour. Last year's data shows that the value of perquisites represented 15 pct. of the total farm and ranch labor expenditures.

GETTING READY
FOR TURKEY DAY

The forecast of the 1984 U.S. cranberry crop is a record high 3.14 million barrels, up 4 pct. from the previous record set in 1983 and 7 pct. more than the 1982 crop, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Based on early Aug. conditions, all states, except Wash., expect increased production from 1983.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE "Current Agricultural Issues"...Secretary of Agriculture John Block focuses on current agricultural issues, including the availability of grain for the Soviet Union, recent criticism of consumer-nutrition programs, and restructuring of farm loans. Jim Johnson interviews. (191)

"Acarine Mite Update"...Richard Cowden with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service talks about the seriousness of the acarine mite infestation in Texas, and what the Department is doing about it. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (192)

"Dairy Surplus Situation"...Merrill Marxman with USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service focuses on the present inventory situation involving dairy products and factors contributing to the current reduction. Jim Johnson interviews. (193)

"Farm Safety - Lightning"...USDA electrical engineer Ed Cohen discusses lightning - what it is, where it's most prevalent and the types of problems it can cause. Don Elder interviews. (194)

"Lightning - Telephones and Personal Computers"...USDA electrical engineer Ed Cohen describes how new consumer appliances such as telephones and personal computers are highly susceptible to damage from lightning during thunderstorms. Don Elder interviews. (195)

FCIC EXPANDS COVERAGE

Sec'y of Agriculture John Block announced that the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation has expanded 1985 coverage on 18 commodities in 48 states. The expansion involves 999 county crop programs. Said Block, "Investing in crop insurance is a prudent business practice for today's farmer." Block also noted the FCIC expanded use of the actual production history program to include corn, grain sorghum, tobacco and peanuts for the 1985 crop year. Cotton and rice were included in the program in 1984. Under the program, yield guarantees are based on the actual production records of the insured farmer rather than on average county yields.

BAA! BAA! GOT A PARASITE?

A microscopic parasite has been confirmed for the first time as a widespread cause of sheep abortions in the U.S., according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Abortions in 16 flocks in Iowa, Maryland, Montana, Minnesota and S. Dakota were traced to the parasite Toxoplasma gondii. Sheep contract toxoplasmosis by eating oocysts, the egg-like form of the parasite, which they pick up eating grasses or drinking water. The oocysts are spread by cats--from family pets to the Siberian tiger after they eat infected prey. (For more information, contact Jitender P. Dubey, USDA, Beltsville, MD 301/344-2128.)

IN THIS CORNER OF THE PINHEAD

A wasp, so small it can stand on a pinhead, is being pitted against the mighty Colorado potato beetle in a three year test, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The female wasp approaches a beetle egg, taps it with her antenna, and if it has the right feel or sound or something, she lays an egg in it...and that takes care of any future beetle. If tests prove successful, the wasp could be incorporated into pest management programs within five to six years. (For more info, call entomologist Robert Schroder, Beltsville, Md. 301/344-2369.)

OFF MIKE

Obviously farm broadcasters have a lot of pull. As regular readers of this column know, we've commented from time to time about farm broadcasters who have won milking contests. Now comes still another. This time it's Orion Samuelson (WGN, Chicago, IL). He won a milking contest at the Illinois State Fair. As we received the report, "With the help of a cooperative Jersey cow, he milked 5½ pounds in just 90 seconds." Udderly fantastic (sorry 'bout that) ... Dewey Nelson is now at KNEB, Scottsbluff, NE. He was at KLGR, Redwood Falls, MN. KNEB is part of the KRVN family of stations, and Dewey will be exchanging information with Rich Hawkins and crew at KRVN. Dean Augustin, formerly at KXEL, Waterloo, IA, replaced Dewey at KLGR ... Mark Pearson (WHO, Des Moines, IA) had the honor of showing the top steer in the Governor's Charity Class Steer Show at the Iowa State Fair this year. The winning steer, "Charolais Brown," was sponsored by the Iowa Charolais Breeder's Assn. Gov. Terry Branstad's entry finished seventh ... Nice letter from Paul Schrimpf, former farm broadcaster (1945-1961) and government worker (USDA 1961-1965). Paul reminisenced a bit about the days when he was at WDAF, Kansas City, MO, when he also was a stringer for the old Monitor program. He remembers getting a letter from John Douglass in Australia saying he had heard a Monitor program that Paul was involved in. He also recollects the days when he MC'ed the annual National Farm and Home Hour pickup from Kansas City at the FFA Convention and American Royal Livestock and Horse Show. As he expressed it, "It was great, all nineteen years!" ... Those of you who receive our DOWN TO EARTH weekly television series are seeing a new face. He's Vic Powell, and he joined our television staff earlier this summer. He will be helping us keep on the straight and narrow when we start feeding our weekly television series to stations via WESTAR IV after Oct. 1. In fact, Vic will be expanding our television news service to once a week instead of every two weeks, as we have been doing for the past two years. We'll be contacting you later with the full schedule and the satellite information you will need to pull the programs from the bird.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1421...(Weekly 13½ min documentary) In rural, suburban and urban America divorce statistics remain high. Brenda Curtis looks into the emotional impact of divorce. She talks to various individuals about the pain one experiences during divorce. In addition, she talks to University of Maryland Family Life Specialist Billie Frazier about the whole emotional aspect of the divorce process.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1409...(Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; The lessons learned about the Avian Flu; Improving livestock production; The plus and minuses of southern forage crops; Emergency conservation program available to farmers.

CONSUMER TIME #903...(Weekly reel of five 2½-3 min features) What is physical fitness; Tone up at the terminals; Is fitness a fad; Stretching yourself; Sweet potato popularity.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Tues. Sept. 4, Ag outlook report, Weekly weather and crop summary; Wed, Sept. 12, World crop production report and Crop production report. Thurs, Sept. 13, World tobacco situation, USSR grain situation outlook, World ag. supply and demand, Milk production report.

James L. Johnson
JAMES L. JOHNSON
Chief, Radio-Television